**1 John 3:1-2 *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.***

The church has been through a lot lately. When our brothers and sisters go through things, we go through things - deaths, sickness, accidents. Life can be difficult at times. As our brothers and sisters suffer, we suffer with them. We’re called to bear one another’s burdens – Galatians 6:2 - *Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Even with the challenges each person here is facing, each personal battle, every concern felt, let’s take this morning and consider how truly fortunate, truly blessed we are to have a Father in heaven, a High Priest like Jesus, a Holy Spirit indwelling us, and a church family loving us. If Ms. Janie were sitting here with us right now, she’d say, “I’m thankful for my church family and I love you all.” She’s now in heaven. May we be thankful in her place.

Verse 1 begins - *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!* Behold, see, understand, literally to know with certainty what manner of agape, unconditional love God has bestowed, granted and gifted us. Salvation, Grace, Mercy, Love… free for us through faith – a gift given by God. Love of our heavenly Father, Who is completely autonomous, needs nothing from us, already has it all, yet He loves us with an unconditional, agape love. That we… you, me… should be called children of God! Called – literally surnamed, known as God’s child! Have you ever sat and thought – I’m God’s child. I may have problems, but I’m not a problem to Him. He loves me completely, even as I walk this narrow way. What an encouraging and hopeful thought!

Verse 1 ends - *Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.* The world does not know us, cannot recognize us, does not comprehend us, as children of God… why? Because they don’t know God, they don’t know the Son of God. We saw that in John 1 right? Verses 10-11 *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.* But some did receive Jesus – verse 12-13 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the****right to become children of God****, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* Those who have not been reborn in God through Jesus do not know God. Jesus gives us the right to become children of God! Don’t be discouraged that the world considers you different. Be encouraged that the world does not recognize you… it means you’re different! Now we witness, point more to Christ, so they might receive Him, and, once they receive Him, they recognize us. That’s hopeful today!

Verse 2 begins - *Beloved, now we are children of God.* This is a statement. Well loved, at this very moment, not sometime in the future when we do better or act better or talk better, but now… we are sons and daughters of God, because, the Greek word for **are** used here is esmen meaning we heard and received the gospel. God doesn’t wait to be glad we’re His child until we meet Him in heaven. He’s glad right now! And we must be glad right now! Let’s be encouraged in that today.

Verse 2 ends *- and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* Norman is seeing Jesus as He is. Ms Janie is seeing Him as He is. Sandra is seeing Him as He is, Cindy is seeing Him as He is. It is not yet apparent to us what we shall look like, how we will appear, none of this is clear. What we are certain of, understand, is that when He is revealed, made apparent to us, we shall be like Him. We shall see Him - gaze upon Him, with the idea of gazing as upon something remarkable, unbelievably beautiful as He truly is. 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 says *For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.* Verse 12 says *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.* All this world now is a dim mirror, giving us a blurred, fuzzy reflection of the Glory that awaits on the other side. We don’t know a whole lot about heaven, but we can trust fully in our God Who waits for us there.

This week, let’s look past the temporary pain and sadness of this life, towards our life to come in heaven. Let’s be overjoyed in the knowledge that we are children of God, called by His name, known to His eyes, fully understood in His sight. Yes we have problems, but we are not a problem to Him. We are children of God now, misunderstood, not because of something we’ve done but unrecognized because of who we love. That’s not a problem… that’s a blessing! What an opportunity to introduce others so they can become children too! Will everyone accept? No. Jesus knew only some will believe – John 6:64 *But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.* Don’t let that slow you down. Be joyous this morning – You’re a child of the King, a servant of the Most High – everyone will not love you, but God does! That alone is enough to brighten our darkest hour.